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23 MAY 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations

VIA : Deputy Director for Administration

FROM : F. W. M. Jarney  
Director of Personnel

SUBJECT : DDO Responses in Agency Employee Survey

25 MAY 1977  
JEB

1. Action Requested: followup, as seen necessary.

2. When our initial analysis of the Agency employee survey (taken during summer 1976) was sent to the Director, I told him that we would prepare individual analyses for each Directorate. Our schedule has been affected adversely by competing requirements on staff time, but we did attach priority to making the attached results available to you at this time.

3. The underlying philosophy of this survey has the following underpinnings:

(a) it was intended to form an Agency-wide reference point for inter-Directorate comparisons and, after subsequent surveys have been completed, for inter-temporal comparisons.

(b) some questions have been incorporated that provide a basis for comparison with Government-wide responses.

(c) the responsibility for followup is shared between the Office of Personnel, which has reacted to the indications of need for additional Agency-wide guidance, and the individual Directorates, which have the action responsibility in several major areas of personnel management.

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4. The whole topic of career management has been identified as a major problem area both for the Agency as a whole and the DDO in particular. I admit some puzzlement that the DDO, which has the pioneer effort in career management and has assigned significant resources to that effort, does not score higher marks. This may indicate that the nature of the problem is of different degree and complexity for the Directorate as compared to the others.

5. From the morale survey taken separately last fall, we have some indication that criticism of personnel management policies and practices should not be viewed in a vacuum. The broader problem of morale has both internal and external aspects. Factors that impinge on job effectiveness also color one's view of one's career.

6. To set things into perspective, I should record that our limited basis for comparing personnel practices in this Agency with other agencies provides some comfort that the Agency responses are generally favorable. Compared to the rest of government, the Agency responses are better than average with respect to such topics as: communication about job performance, development of skills and abilities, training, fairness of pay, recognition of good performance, the fairness of promotions, the opportunities for promotion, working conditions, and higher level interest in better ways to get the job done. The responses are poorer than average with respect to (a) having enough work to do and (b) higher level employees doing too much lower level work.

7. You may wish to concentrate your attention on those areas in which the Directorate's response is notably poorer than that for the Agency as a whole. These are flagged in Addendum I.

8. Addendum II gives you the sense of the responses from those 40 percent of respondees who took the time to give essay type responses, often constructive in nature. We have tried to be representative and have included responses critical of the Office of Personnel.

9. In summary, we are no different from other organizations in the sense that we have a wide spectrum of employee perceptions about their Agency and how it is treating them. For the Agency as

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a whole, we do not yet have basis to say that these perceptions are improving or worsening. As the Operations Directorate does have an earlier survey, it has some basis for evaluating possible shifts in perception; this could be valuable. Even so, I suspect we would find that most of the personnel "issues" are not new issues. Why are they being raised in our consciousness now? (a) An obvious explanation is that we have asked for critical views, in the survey and by official memorandum. Views that existed but were never surfaced are now being surfaced. This is good in the sense that it allows management to take constructive steps to redress problems. It is bad if management takes alarm because criticism is made explicit. The traditional hard measure of employee attitude is to watch "attrition." When things are too bad, employees leave. Attrition has never been lower, even though we are in the second year of an economic recovery. (b) Our most important asset in employee relations is esprit de corps, which Peter Drucker defines as that which leads employees to place the organization's welfare above their own. It has been high when our employees feel a strong sense of mission and have confidence that the Agency does not abuse their trust. Conversely, those conditions that create disgruntled employees create the greatest security risk, and seriously detract from personal and organizational effectiveness. (c) Finally, we should bear in mind that, perhaps unique in government, we have gone through 10 years of declining personnel ceilings, with resultant pressure on promotional opportunities and increasing pressure on employees and managers attempting to get the job done with fewer resources. The reductions in overseas presence have created particular problems for the Operations Directorate in terms of trying to get the job done with Headquarters-based personnel. If my office may be of any assistance to you as you evaluate your personnel programs, please let me know.

(Signed) F. W. M. Janney

F. W. M. Janney

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